VIEWPOINT PAPER

Family Financial Literacy and National Development: A Family Social Institution Perspective

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Abstract

This paper concerns the role of families as a social institution in the national development process with attention to financial literacy. The more financially literate a nation's citizens, the healthier its economy and development pace. After framing the family as a social institution, a demographic profile of contemporary Saudi families is provided as a working case, but information herein pertains to any country's national development strategy. The connection between national development and family financial literacy and inclusion is then developed to better inform policies pursuant to national development. Recommendations for home economists to monitor and influence include (a) valuing and demographically profiling the family as a social institution; (b) creating and supporting a national financial education entity and platform; (c) designing and implementing financial education curricula for all education levels; (d) providing preservice and inservice teacher training in financial education; and (e) bolstering financial literacy, inclusion, and stability. Financially literate families are best able to grow a nation.

KEYWORDS: FAMILIES, SOCIAL INSTITUTION, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, FINANCIAL LITERACY, FINANCIAL INCLUSION, FINANCIAL STABILITY, FINANCIAL EDUCATION, SAUDI ARABIA

Introduction

"Home Economics as Family Education in Saudi Arabia reflects the broader purposes of education to enable students to develop a strong sense of citizenship and cultural values" (Alharbi & Renwick, 2017, p. 112). Siegel (2016) commented on "the connections between the responsibilities of citizenship and the burden of national development [that falls on citizens]" (p. 982). Responsible citizens would be financially literate because the latter impacts national development (Chaulagain & Devkota, 2018). Alharbi (2017) recently tied home economics in Saudi Arabia to the Kingdom's most recent national development plan: *Vision 2030* (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia [KSA], 2016).

Home economists are well equipped to strengthen and stabilize citizens, so they can contribute to national development strategies and that includes engendering financial literacy (Matsushima, 1989). Well within the remit of home economics, this paper concerns the role of

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families as a social institution in national development with attention to family financial literacy. Home economics has long viewed families as a social institution to the point that it is the key focus of its mission statement (Brown & Paolucci, 1979). Arising from the authors' quarter century collegial relationship—one a home economist and the other a Saudi citizen (university professor)—Saudi Arabia is used as a working case to illustrate the strong links among these three constructs: family as a social institution, financial literacy, and national development. Home economists around the world can gain insights from the ideas shared herein.

Currently, Saudi Arabia is intentionally transitioning from an oil-based to a knowledge-based economy—a transition that is heavily dependent on Saudi citizens and families (KSA, 2016). Historically, with the unification of diverse and warring tribes into one nation, and the 1933 discovery of oil, Saudi Arabia "turned itself from a desert nation to a modern, sophisticated state and a major player on the international stage" (Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, ca. 2016, para. 3). Before this transformation, Saudi Arabia "barely existed as a nation [as] the land hadn't been unified in 1,000 years. ... [It was a collection of] fractious tribal groups" (Fickling, 2021, paras. 2, 3) that were eventually brought together into one kingdom—the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

The newly constituted KSA embarked on the road to modernization fuelled by the discovery of oil and the establishment of an oil-based economy. It was inordinately successful in this endeavour becoming the top oil producing nation in the world (Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, ca. 2016; Fickling, 2021; Schaer, 2022). In the meantime, however, the decline of oil as a nonrenewable natural resource, along with unsustainability and climate change, led KSA to appreciate that "to survive and thrive much past its first 100 years as a nation, [it] is going to have to act" (Fickling, 2021, para. 23). Why? Because KSA earns 80% of its export income from selling oil (40% of the size of its economy). But the oil reserves will dry up within 60 years at today's extraction rate (Schaer, 2022).

To that end, KSA's (2016) most recent national development plan (*Vision 2030*) was designed to transition away from oil to a knowledge-based economy. This plan is dependent on three pillars (vibrant society, thriving economy, and ambitious nation) with Saudi families playing a role in all three—"families are the key building block" (KSA, 2016, p. 28). That said, "no country has more to lose from the transition away from fossil fuels than Saudi Arabia" (Fickling, 2021, para. 1). This risk applies directly to Saudi families with many currently benefiting from existing oil-dependent economic arrangements (Al-Khraif et al., 2020; Teitelbaum et al., 2023).

Families matter in developing a nation's economy. They are not just separate social units. Instead, they join the polity, economy, labour market, health care, and education systems as key *social institutions* impacting national development (Chaulagain & Devkota, 2018). McGregor (2019) (a home economist) affirmed that strong, stable, and empowered individuals and families are necessary for successful national development. And financially literate families are even more empowered than financially illiterate families with both affecting national development (Chaulagain & Devkota, 2018; "Why financial education," 2019).

After (a) framing the family as a social institution, the discussion turns to (b) a demographic profile of contemporary Saudi families. (c) The link between financial literacy and national development (especially in KSA) is then described and enriched with a discussion of (d) national development indicators, (e) family economic security and national economic prosperity and (f) financial stability and financial inclusion. Mindfulness of the link between national development and the financial literacy of families as a social institution better ensures effective policies, programs, and initiatives for strengthening national economies.

Family as a Social Institution

The United Nations 1994 *International Year of the Family* (IYF) initiative, spearheaded and lead by an international team of home economists (Noguchi, 1995), proposed that families are the cornerstone of any society and play a vital role in national economies and their development. Without them, there would be no business owners, no entrepreneurs, no labourers, no service providers, and no consumers. The IYF conceptualized families as a key *institution* that provides customs, practices, relationships, and behavioral patterns of importance in the life of communities and societies (IYF Secretariat, 1992; Seufert-Barr, 1994). Other key institutions include the government, legal and justice system, economy, labour market, education system, health care system, social welfare system, and faith and religion (McGregor, 2008, 2022a).

The family as a social institution is (a) the oldest and most basic unit of human organizations; (b) a critical link among generations; (c) the primary transmitter of culture and values; (d) the sustainer of heritage; and (e) the major provider of food, shelter, protection, and nurturance (Seufert-Barr, 1994). Families are a basic social unit, an organization of people living and working together. Social units are part of larger social groups like communities, societies, and cultures (Sokalski, 1992). Regardless of what they look like (i.e., their *structure* including nuclear, extended, single parent, and blended), the family social institution fulfils six basic *functions* for societies and nations (IYF Secretariat, 1992; Mirabelli, 2018; Sokalski, 1992; Vanier Institute of the Family [VIF], 2021):

- *emotional care and physical maintenance of group members and relatives*. Within healthy families, children, adults, and seniors all receive the care and support they need (e.g., food, shelter, clothing, protection). This support is provided for the healthy, sick, and people with disabilities;
- *addition of new members* through procreation or adoption as well as fostering and guardianship. Society renews itself through families. Families also *give name and legal status* to their members;
- *socialization and education of children into adult roles and responsibilities*. Families prepare children for life by teaching skills, values, and attitudes that equip them to learn, work, form friendships, and contribute to society. Children also socialize adult family members;
- *social control of members* (e.g., setting boundaries, disciplining, mentoring) and *protection* of family members against all forms of violence. This exercise yields the maintenance of order within a family and any groups external to it. Within families, individuals learn positive values and behaviors and receive criticism and lessons to mitigate negative ones. Sometimes family members have to be protected from each other;
- *production, consumption, exchange and distribution of goods and services*. Families provide for their own by consuming and producing goods and services. As they strive to fulfil their members' needs, they play a vital role in local and national economies by earning, spending, saving, investing, and giving money and in their roles as laborers and entrepreneurs; and
- *maintenance of family morale and motivation* to ensure task performance both within the family and in other groups. Families provide the glue that holds society together and keeps it functioning. Beyond providing mere social control, families, through love and spiritual leadership (emotional caring and upbringing), inspire, nurture, and support their members' self esteem, self-understanding, and potential. (McGregor, 2009, p. 63)

Saudi Family Social Institution Snapshot

Gabriel (1998) argued that if home economists diligently gather "baseline data" about family home life and financial circumstances, they are "ideal persons to draft programs of action" (p. 7) that can feed into national development plans. Respecting this potential for home economics to influence national development, this section provides a snapshot of baseline data about the Saudi family as a social institution. Home economists in other nations are encouraged to follow this model and develop profiles of their local context (see McGregor, 2022b, for a recent example of Philippine families).

In general, studies about changing national and family demographics "are very rare in the Arabian context" (Al-Khraif et al., 2020, p. 3). But information is available that can be used to develop a demographic snapshot of Saudi families as a social institution. To begin, there are 5.5 million households in KSA with two thirds (65%) comprising Saudi citizens. The remaining households (35%) are expatriates from outside KSA (Statista, 2022). The Cultural Atlas (2022), drawing on Joseph (2018), explained that, for centuries, the extended family was the main family structure in KSA. Many Saudi extended families hold a tribal identity and are generally patrilocal and patrilineal. That said, rapid urbanization in KSA is making the nuclear family more common. Al-Khraif et al. (2020, p. 6) recently coined the term the "nucleation of families."

More than 80% of Saudi citizens now live in urban areas representing nearly a 300% increase since 1950 and the 1930's discovery of oil (Alahmadi & Atkinson, 2019). Although KSA cities are not tribally organized, family and kinship affiliations remain strong (Teitelbaum et al., 2023). Nonetheless, urbanization, driven by rapid modernization, can deeply shift family demographics and dynamics by affecting education levels, employment status and income levels, fertility rates, family size and composition, health status, and family safety and security (Al-Khraif et al., 2020; Moghadam, 2010)—a shift that is happening right now in KSA.

As with any patriarchal, nuclear family arrangement, Saudi men are expected to be the breadwinners and protectors, and Saudi women are expected to focus on homemaking, childbearing and child rearing, and nurturing the family unit. Saudi men are expected to be economically secure before they marry (to provide a dowry) thus making them older than women in most marriages. Divorce is possible and increasing, but Saudi men go about it differently than women who must access the family court system. The relationship between Saudi parents and their children is normally very strong (Al-Khraif et al., 2020; Cultural Atlas, 2022; Joseph, 2018).

Patriarchal norms are slowly changing in KSA with these changes tied to increasing family prosperity due in part to women entering the labour market as employees and as entrepreneurs (encouraged by the current government) (Cultural Atlas, 2022). And since the discovery of oil, a growing middle class has emerged that tends to value materialism and wealth accumulation more so than familial obligations (Teitelbaum et al., 2023). Al-Khraif et al. (2020) likewise commented on KSA's recent "economic abundance and the accompanying rise in consumerism and the purchase of status symbols, such as cars, employing domestic servants, and extravagance in housing and clothing—all visible lifestyle changes in the Kingdom accompanied by a remarkable increase in family income" (pp. 6-7).

Unlike in the past or in rural areas, contemporary urban Saudi spouses often share financial control (Cultural Atlas, 2022). "There is an increase in women's participation in financial roles and responsibilities within families" (Al-Khraif et al., 2020, p. 9). Affluent Saudi families also prefer to hire expatriate domestic employees to assist with daily household and childcare tasks and duties (Al-Khraif et al., 2020; Cultural Atlas, 2022). And nearly two thirds (60%) of Saudi families (average size six people) own their own home, which compares to traditional reliance on official quarters such as villas, traditional houses, and family compounds (Al-Khraif et al., 2020).

Other changes are also unfolding. "A profound reduction in Saudi Arabia's fertility rate, ... the increasing number of never-married women, marital dissolutions, women entering the labor force and so on has also influenced changes in Saudi Arabian families" (Al-Khraif et al., 2020, p. 1). Saudi is a gendered society with highly patriarchal gendered roles within families. Women are said to carry the honour of the family, and men are expected to preserve family honour. To that end, the senior males of the family often make decisions about and for female family members. The male guardianship system thus evolved, but even that is changing in more openminded times. Gendered norms, which have always affected Saudi family life and dynamics, "have been rapidly changing as industrialisation and economic growth have impacted ideas about men's control and women's public involvement" (Cultural Atlas, 2022, para. 11). Women can now drive a car and start a business, and many attend university (Al-Khraif et al., 2020) with these changes providing increased financial rewards and empowerment.

Demographically speaking, religion also plays a key role in Saudi families. "Saudi Arabia is a collective society having an intertwined Arab culture and Islamic values and an acceptance of hierarchical order in society" (Al-Khraif et al., 2020, p. 3). Saudi families are deeply shaped by the practice of Islam, which is a core aspect of their everyday life. Most Saudi families are practicing Muslims. Family members' personal identity is closely tied to "a strict religious practice that is part of their social activity" (Al-Khraif et al., 2020, p. 6). People learn common religious (Islamic) values and traditions, which shape family life and most decisions including family financial management decisions and financial planning.

In summary, whether extended or nuclear, tribal or urban, lower, middle, or upper class, the family is considered to be the most powerful social structure in the Arab world (Joseph, 2018; KSA, 2016). Al-Khraif et al. (2020) described Saudi Arabian families as "united, sympathetic, and supportive, thereby maintaining high levels of happiness and peace" (p. 7). On the other hand, families are also experiencing major shifts and transitions in family size, family structure, family composition, household head's median age, fertility trends, nuptiality (marriage rates and dissolutions), and the roles and responsibilities of family members (Al-Khraif et al., 2020). KSA's national development plan and vision for the future will be deeply impacted by the demographic shifts and transitions within its most basic social institution including its financial savviness.

Saudi Family Financial Literacy and KSA National Development

Speaking for home economists, McGregor (2009) affirmed that families' duties as a social institution "are onerous. They share the responsibility for the changing world, and are integral to the social structure and development of all economies and societies. Families are major agents of development and progress, and their contribution is crucial for success" (p. 65). Of the six family functions they fulfill is of interest herein, the production (labour) and consumption function, as families play a vital role in local and national economics. They are the backbone of the economy, its chief support system. Of the six family functions they fulfill, the production (labour) and consumption function is of interest herein as families play a vital role in local and national economics. Being illiterate or ignorant about one's finances is not conducive to assuming the key national development function of production and consumption.

Financial Literacy

Financial literacy refers to "being educated about money and finance enabl[ing] people to make smarter money management decisions that lead directly to a financially secure future" (O'Connell, 2019, para. 8). Faboyede et al. (2014) argued that financial literacy education is key to national development because it contributes to more transparent, healthy, stable, and sustainable economies. “Stable finances are [also] key to personal economic security” (Alghamdi et al., 2021, p. 9), which itself is key to national development (Western et al., 2012). Financially literate citizens are better able to “ultimately grow the economy [by contributing to] the smooth functioning of financial markets and the economy” (Faboyede et al., 2014, Abstract). Doan (2020) maintained that citizens’ savings (a key aspect of financial literacy) can contribute to national development as well because savings help create “a long-term capital supply [that augments] economic growth” (p. 594) (see also KSA, 2021).

Financial Stability

That said, family financial stability is often compromised in developing nations such as KSA with poverty alleviation becoming a major component of most national development plans, an issue for which home economists should remain cognizant (McGregor, 2019). Higher rates of poverty lead to lower rates of national development and vice versa (Chaulagain & Devkota, 2018). Faboyede et al. (2014) suggested a link between financial literacy education and poverty alleviation thus making financial literacy key to national development (see also Al-Khamri, 2019). KSA’s rapid urbanization has likely impacted its poverty rate, although the nation does not release regular statistics (World Population Review, 2021). Thelwell (2018) estimated Saudi’s poverty rate at 12.7% in 2017 (compared to 10.1% in Canada, for example). Some scholars are exploring how *Vision 2030* may relate to poverty and family financial stability in KSA (Al-Khamri, 2019).

Roberts et al. (2013) tendered a different reason for why financially stable and literate citizens can assist in achieving national development plans. They maintained that alleviating “material disadvantage” (p. 23) through financial education would strengthen a nation through improved social inclusion, social cohesion, and community well-being (i.e., a vibrant society, one of *Vision 2030*'s three pillars) (KSA, 2016). To ensure this advantage, they said financial literacy depends on holding knowledge about four aspects of family finances: (a) financial control (day-to-day money management); (b) financial planning (series of steps to achieve goals); (c) financial concepts (e.g., risk, budget, save, borrow, interest, liquidity); and (d) financial behaviour (i.e., judiciously choosing financial products and services).

Gross Domestic Product and Financial Literacy

National development success is reflected in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is a statistic providing information about the size of an economy and how fast it is growing. GDP measures the monetary value of all goods and services that workers produce over a specific time period within a country’s borders. An ideal annual GDP is between 2% and 3% (Krammer, 2021). Research shows that the higher a nation’s GDP per capita, the higher its financial literacy rate. Countries with GDP/capita over $60,000US had a 70% or higher financial literacy rate. Those with GDP/capita under $5,500US had financial literary rates of 15% of less (Iacovoiu, 2018). Virtually half or “49.3% of the variation in the financial literacy rate is explained by GDP/capita [r = .072]” (Iacovoiu, 2018, p. 25).

This fact affirms the importance of ensuring financially literate citizens if a nation wants a successful national development plan. The more financially healthy (literate) a nation’s citizens, the healthier its economy and development pace (Douissa, 2020). In 2020, KSA’s GDP/capita was $20,110US (World Bank, 2021), and its financial literacy rate was 31% (KSA, 2020). KSA (2021) recounted that a 2017 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) study reported a 45% financial literacy rate for KSA, which is low compared to the 60% OECD average. These statistics regarding Saudi families’ low and declining financial literacy rates point to a potentially stalled national development pace (Douissa, 2020) unless addressed right away.

From a related perspective, national development depends on productivity, and productivity depends on people's economic independency and empowerment, which are both linked to human capital (i.e., the economic value of a worker's experience and skill set in the labour force) (Pande et al., 2006). Chaulagain and Devkota (2018) asserted that because being financially literate empowers people, it contributes to human capital thus national development. They maintained that the increased confidence and competence arising from the empowerment gained with financial literacy bodes well for human capital. Increased human capital (i.e., worker productivity) in turn boosts economic development and growth leading to a higher GDP and a healthier national economy.

Family Economic Security and National Economic Prosperity

Home economists have come to appreciate that family and household economies play a pivotal role in national development (McGregor, 2019). Personal, family, and household economic security and national economic prosperity are interconnected (Western et al., 2012). To illustrate, financially illiterate individuals and families tend to carry heavy debt burdens (Alghamdi et al., 2021). Families (households) carrying heavy debt loads can be a strain on national economies especially countries trying to transition and grow (Valckx, 2017).

To elaborate, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2017) explained that increased household debt (e.g., homes, cars, appliances, and furniture) boosts the economy in the short term because consumer spending creates jobs. But when highly indebted households must curb spending to pay down debt, national economic growth often experiences a drag. "Gains in household debt have a positive impact on the economy in the short term [because of increased consumption]. Three years later, the impact is negative" (Valckx, 2017, para. 5). There is no money left to spend or save because people are using their income to service debt.

Five years ago, Saudi citizens were borrowing at very high rates with one in five defaulting on loan payments. One quarter was unable to pay their utility bills, and nearly half (43%) had experienced an income drop (before the COVID-19 global pandemic). The majority (80%) had no investment plans, and almost half (45%) had no savings (King Khalid Foundation [KKF], 2018; "Why financial education," 2018). Increased savings (both culture and practice) is a major focus of the Saudi government relative to achieving *Vision 2030* (KSA, 2016, 2021). Currently, personal economic prosperity is not guaranteed within Saudi families, intimating that national economic prosperity may be at risk (Western et al., 2012). As families are the workhorses of any national economy, their financially literacy is imperative.

Financial Inclusion

Financial inclusion also factors into this dynamic (i.e., access to financial products and services such as credit, bank accounts, payment services, insurance, pensions, and microcredit) (Alghamdi et al., 2021; Pearce, 2011). Economic development is tied to financial inclusion (Pearce, 2011; World Bank, 2016). Using financial education to bring financially disempowered people into the "financial mainstream [assures more] stable and equitable economic growth and development. [In short, family] financial empowerment is a necessary condition for national development" (Chaulagain & Devkota, 2018, p. 6), and financial literacy and financial inclusion boost financial empowerment.

Saudi Arabia reports a 31% financial inclusion rate, which is considered low (Fintechnews Middle East, 2020). Low rates on both indices (financial literacy and inclusion) represent barriers to KSA achieving its economic development vision. Financial inclusion is paramount to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region's global competitiveness, employment creation, and increased incomes, KSA included (Khaled, 2010; Saab, 2017). The KSA government recently recognized this with its decision to make available government-backed savings products, simplified access to banking savings products especially for low income and those in remote areas, enhanced mortgages that are shari'ah (Islamic law) compliant, mortgage guarantee products for middle-to low-income consumers, and to promote insurance claim settlements (KSA, 2021).

Financial Education

Home economists have a longstanding concern for financial literacy. "Home Economics courses provide many opportunities for students to practice and gain competency in making financial decisions that apply to food, clothing, shelter and family living choices that people must make over the life-span" (Smith & de Zwart, 2010, p. 18). Focusing on financial literacy is also a powerful way to stave off underdevelopment in a nation. To that end, the provision of financial education is consciously being added as a strategy to national development plans. More and more often, policy makers are realizing financial literacy's role in bolstering the success of their development initiatives (Emaikwu, 2011; Faboyede et al., 2014).

Saudi Arabia's national development plan acknowledged both that (a) "families are the key building block of a society" (KSA, 2016, p. 28), and (b) there is a need to "prepare a modern curriculum focused on rigorous standards in literacy, numeracy, skills and character development" (KSA, 2016, p. 40). But the vision statement did not single out financial literacy or financially literate families. Given its absence in the vision statement, Saudi policy makers, educators, financial bodies, and nongovernment organizations have subsequently been positioning financial education and financial literacy as key aspects of achieving *Vision 2030* (King Khalid Foundation [KKF], 2018; Union of Arab Banks [UAB], 2017).

To elaborate, the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA) launched a *Financial Literacy Entity* (FLE) (KKF, 2018; KSA, 2020) that will "coordinate and synchronize efforts revolving around financial education to ensure quality and consistency of materials and messages, as well as reach and scale" (KSA, 2020, p. 38) and "improve awareness of the benefits of financial planning" (KSA, 2020, p. 60). In 2019, KSA also released a *Financial Literacy Strategy*, which was ultimately merged with the *National Saving Strategy*. Currently under review and being refreshed, this combined strategy strives to help Saudi individuals and families make sound financial decisions and gain better access to personal financial tools (financial inclusion) thereby improving their financial well-being. This family-focused financial literacy initiative was intentionally designed to help achieve *Vision 2030* (KSA, 2021).

Future Directions and Conclusion

Envisioning families as a social institution with a central role in national development is gaining traction in Saudi Arabia. Home economists are encouraged to closely monitor and influence this development. The architects of *Vision 2030* recognized family as the "key building block of a society" (KSA, 2016, p. 28) but not explicitly the economy. This happened later. Under the ambitious nation theme, *Vision 2030* recognized the need to "promote greater financial independence by providing planning tools such as mortgages, savings portfolios, and retirement options" (KSA, 2016, p. 72). This strategy was judged to help Saudi citizens be responsible for their lives because a lack of personal responsibility thwarts national development plans (KSA, 2016).

More recently, the *Financial Sector Development Program* (FSDP) (KSA, 2021) developed an ambitious and broad-reaching program related to achieving *Vision 2030*. Its third-level objective focuses on the promotion and enabling of citizens' financial planning (i.e., retirement, and saving), which *is* viewed as part of a thriving economy. This objective pertains to improved savings and enhanced financial literacy (see KSA, 2021, p. 34). The FSDP (under the auspice of the Ministry of Finance) acknowledged that the focus on citizens' financial planning and savings is a worthwhile trade off. "Increased focus on savings might negatively impact economic growth in the short-term as citizens divert away from consumption. However, long-term the impact will stabilize and will support productive growth" (KSA, 2021, p. 39). Increasing "productive families' contribution to the economy" (KSA, 2021, p. 63) was deemed part of an ambitious nation, but the *productive family* construct was undefined. Home economists could contribute to any future dialogue about its formulation.

Despite these positive initiatives, financial literacy remains problematic in KSA. Saudi Arabia's 2020 GDP was -4.1% down from 4.5% in 2015 reflecting a major oil price slump and threat to KSA's prosperity (World Bank, 2021). This negative GDP intimates a low financial literacy rate (Iacovoiu, 2018), which is indeed low at 31%, the lowest in the Gulf Region (KSA, 2020). Saudi Arabia's financial inclusion rate is also quite low (31%) (Fintechnews Middle East, 2020). And Saudi consumers scored below the minimum required level for successful financial behavior thus compromising their financial stability and security (Albassami & Alyousif, 2019) and nation building.

Taken together, these factors (i.e., GDP, financial literacy rate, financial inclusion rate, financial stability, and the poverty rate) intimate deep challenges if KSA chooses to depend on individual and family financial literacy to achieve national development goals as is the new global trend. In the spirit of home economics long history with the notion of families as a social institution (since the early nineties), the authors proposed reframing this scenario from a *family as a social institution perspective*. This lens provides powerful justification for strengthening Saudi Arabia's individual and family financial literacy rates to augment national development plans. Financially literate Saudi families are a key social institution and a major building block of KSA's economic future. Thus, the role of financially literate Saudi families in national development must become more transparent, so effective policy initiatives can be designed.

It behoves home economists to appreciate that these policies could pertain to (a) creating and supporting a national financial education entity and platform, (b) fostering and facilitating a savings culture, (c) designing and implementing financial education curricula for all levels of education, (d) providing preservice and inservice teacher training in financial education, (e) creating and delivering financial literacy programs for adults (lifelong learning initiatives), (f) supporting entrepreneurship (families in their production role), (g) bolstering financial inclusion so families have access to the financial tools they need to contribute to the economy and (h) collecting statistics on family demographics to ensure a contemporary profile of Saudi's family social institution.

All these initiatives and more would strengthen the Saudi family as a social institution, so it can hold its own against other institutions, especially the economy, labour markets, and marketplaces, as KSA moves forward with *Vision 2030*. Those launching these and related policy initiatives should remain cognizant of current and shifting Saudi family demographics, so they can be mindful of transitioning families while transitioning the KSA economy over the next decade.

Although Saudi Arabia was used to illustrate the argument developed in this paper, actors from other nations embarking on national development plans are encouraged to value and demographically profile *families as a social institution* to better discern how they can best accommodate one of the most important institutions pursuant to national prosperity. Financially literate families are best able to grow an economy (Faboyede et al., 2014). And home economics practitioners around the world are fully capable of contributing to this imperative.

Biographies

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